

VZCZCXRO4225
PP RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHBK #0111 0061004
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 061004Z JAN 06
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5474
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 5045
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 7242

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 000111

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/05/2016
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [TH](#)
SUBJECT: US-AUSTRALIA-JAPAN TRILATERAL COUNTERTERRORISM
COOPERATION CONSULTATIONS IN THAILAND

REF: STATE 179157

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR SUSAN M. SUTTON REASON 1.4 (b) (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In response to reftel, we have met twice with our Australian and Japanese counterparts to coordinate counterterrorism actions in Thailand more closely. We found a high level of agreement on the main counterterrorism concern here, the growing anti-government violence in the three southernmost provinces. We have made a good beginning on better understanding each other's cooperation with the RTG. Given the wide range of cooperation activities already carried out by all three countries, we do not yet have an agreed position on specific, additional actions to recommend. We will continue to consult regularly to look for ways to enhance our trilateral coordination, and to consider recommendations for additional steps. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Post has met twice with the Australian and Japanese embassies to coordinate our counterterrorism efforts more closely, as requested in reftel. We found that all three embassies share similar views of the nature of the terrorism problem in Thailand. Looking at the situation in the South, we agree that shortcomings in the RTG response are exacerbating the security problems there. We are also agreed that the problem was still primarily a reflection of indigenous ethnic Malay-Muslim discontent with the central government, with a small number of militants advocating actual separatism. The violence was not a result of international terrorist activities. If left unresolved, however, international terrorist groups could be attracted to this trouble spot. All three found the talking points provided in reftel useful, and agreed to review current CT activities to look for possible areas of cooperation, or serious gaps that we could help to fill.

¶3. (C) In our subsequent meeting, we took the lead in reviewing a wide range of USG activities designed to assist the RTG in its counterterrorism efforts, underscoring our interest in working together. We discussed also our efforts to gain RTG concurrence on joining PSI, an area in which we have had good cooperation with the Australians and Japanese. All three embassies have also paid close attention to the problem of the remaining UN counterterrorism conventions to which the Thai have not yet signed on. The Japanese are following this particularly closely and looking for further ways to encourage the Thai. We agreed that these remain two important priorities. This meeting was a good opportunity to brief the newly arrived Japanese political counselor, who was not yet familiar with many of the issues raised.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: All three countries are involved in many kinds of bilateral cooperation which have an impact on Thailand's counterterrorism efforts. We have made a good start in exchanging information and beginning to educate each other on our various programs. Given the wide range of

existing assistance on CT, we have not yet reached agreement on additional specific actions that we would recommend taking in cooperation with the RTG to improve its counterterrorism efforts. We plan to meet again soon, and regularly, for follow-up discussions on priorities and a realistic assessment of what kinds of additional cooperation the RTG would accept, taking into account Bangkok's sensitivities about international involvement in this area.

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